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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000269

SIPDIS

ROME FOR MFO (LAROCCO)

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [IS](#) [IR](#) [EG](#) [IAEA](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN POSITION ON POSSIBLE IAEA REFERRAL OF IRAN TO THE UNSC

REF: A. CAIRO 258

[B](#). CAIRO 224

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

- [1](#). (C) Summary: Following the visits of Vice President Cheney and IO Assistant Secretary Silverberg, the GOE position on IAEA referral of Iran to the UNSC is still evolving. While GOE statements suggest some positive movement, Egypt continues to raise regional concerns and its desire for a Middle East zone free of WMD. End summary.
- [2](#). (C) After the January 17 and 18 visits of Vice President Cheney and IO Assistant Secretary Silverberg, Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit and Presidential Spokesman Soliman Awwad made public statements on the upcoming IAEA Board of Governors meeting to discuss referring Iran to the UNSC. According to press reports and the MFA (full text below in para four), Aboul Gheit said dialogue is the best way to resolve the matter, but noted that the GOE is dealing with the Iranian issue from a "technical and legal perspective" in accordance with the IAEA and NPT obligations. Awwad said (Ref A) that "Egypt calls for continuing the (international) dialogue with Iran through diplomatic channels."
- [3](#). (C) Comment: Although both Awwad and Aboul Gheit were non-committal on Egyptian support for an IAEA decision to refer Iran to the UNSC, Aboul Gheit's statement rejecting the existence of another nuclear power in the region could be a positive sign. In addition, in a recent meeting (septel) with the Ambassador on January 16, PM Nazif, while expressing concerns about Israel, told the Ambassador that he did not like "the company" Egypt is keeping on the Iran matter. These various statements support the comment made by MFA's Disarmament Office Director Hossam Aly (Ref B) that Egypt realizes that the international community is leaning towards a decision to refer Iran to the UNSC and that Egypt's ultimate decision on GOE support for referral will depend on the text negotiated at the upcoming Board of Governors meeting. End comment.
- [4](#). (U) The Foreign Ministry released the below statement regarding the Iran/IAEA matter to the press following FM Aboul Gheit's January 17 meeting with IO Assistant Secretary Silverberg.

Begin Embassy translation of statement:

Egypt is following these developments closely. It has been eager from the start of the discussions within the IAEA Board (in 2003) to guarantee all countries' commitment to their obligations and to allow the international community to verify the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. Egypt does not accept the emergence of a military nuclear power in the region. Egypt is also eager to ensure the rights of countries to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear energy (as allowed by the NPT).

Aboul Gheit added that Egypt's concern about the Iranian nuclear issue is derived from its eagerness to support all efforts to prevent nuclear non-proliferation, not only regionally, but also internationally. Egypt has a leading position in the field of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (mainly nuclear arms). Its membership in the IAEA Board of Governors obliges it to fully uphold the responsibilities of such membership concerning the highly sensitive issues of non-proliferation because these issues are closely connected to achieving international peace and security.

Aboul Gheit explained that Egypt is dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue from the technical and legal perspective -- a position that requires Egypt to consider and evaluate the opinion of the IAEA Director, since the IAEA is the technical authority in charge of ensuring the commitment to promises under the agreement of guarantees signed between Iran and the IAEA.

He indicated that Egypt would like to reiterate that the IAEA Board of Governors had issued a resolution on September 24, 2005, stipulating in its first procedural item, that Iran is not fulfilling its obligations under the NPT. However, the

Board did not refer the issue to the UNSC in order to give all parties the opportunity to reach an acceptable settlement of the Iranian issue.

Aboul Gheit confirmed that Egypt still holds to its position that dialogue is the best method to settle the current crisis and that there are many factors that may help to settle it. For example, the Russian proposals could be shaped in a way to satisfy the interests of all parties. Also, the negotiating framework between the EU3 and Iran (in place since 2003) may lead to an acceptable settlement, if the will exists.

Aboul Gheit stressed that the rapid escalation of developments on the Iranian nuclear issue shows once again the importance of the Egyptian initiative on a Middle East free of WMD, mainly nuclear arms. There is no longer any doubt that the initiative is becoming more important than at any time before. It is time the international community takes practical steps to implement this initiative according to a timetable, without a selective policy. The foremost of these steps is that Israel should join the NPT and submit all of its nuclear establishments to inspection under the IAEA.

He stressed that Egypt will not accept the pursuit of a double standard policy or the indifference to its interests unless the international community is ready to bear the consequences of its policies.

Aboul Gheit noted that Egypt does not want to make early assumptions about the situation since the Egyptian position will depend on the nature of the deliberations that will be conducted in the exceptional meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, which has not yet been scheduled. It is also premature to predict the result of this meeting without considering the diplomatic efforts within the geographical groups before and during the meeting, as well as the resolution which will be proposed, after which the final positions of all 35 members of the Board, including Egypt, will be determined.

End translation of text.

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